

Cuban Poet Padilla Runs Afoul of Castro's Literary Laws

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By FRANK SOLER
Herald Latin America Staff

An award-winning poet apparently has become the latest victim of a Castro government campaign to quash anti-revolutionary sentiment among Cuban intellectuals.

Heberto Padilla, 39, winner of the 1968 national poetry prize by the Union of Cuban Artists and Writers, was arrested along with his wife, Belkis, at their Havana apartment last month. The apartment, in the Vedado district of the city, was sealed off.

Although Padilla's wife was subsequently released, Padilla is believed to be still in jail.

Padilla's arrest was not immediately reported by the Cuban press and the charges against him have not been disclosed.

HOWEVER, in a news dispatch from Havana, the French news agency AFP said the "severity of the measure (arrest) suggests the existence of serious charges against the poet."

AFP hinted that Padilla's arrest may have been related to the arrest a day earlier of a French journalist who was preparing to leave Cuba after residing there for more than three years.

The journalist, Pierre Golendorf, was picked up by se-

curity police in Havana on unspecified charges March 19.

Golendorf reportedly is being held incommunicado. Efforts by the French Embassy in Havana to contact or even locate him have been unsuccessful, AFP said.

THERE IS speculation also that Padilla's arrest may have been connected with that of a Cuban agronomist who recently "confessed" that he was an agent for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The agronomist, Raul Alonso Enrique Olive, claimed in a Cuban television appearance that he was a CIA agent when he provided economic information to the leftist French agronomist-economist Rene Dumont. Dumont later wrote a book critical of Castro's economic policies.

Padilla's wife failed to shed any light on her husband's predicament after her release from jail.

"I do not know what he is being accused of," she told the government-controlled Prensa Latina news agency. "I was told only that I can see Heberto on Thursday (a week ago)."

MARRIED for only a month, Mrs. Padilla, also a poet, said she had been allowed to take time off from her job at the Union of Cuban Artists and Writers "to recover emotionally from this unexpected occurrence."

Padilla's arrest, interpreted by observers as a further "Stalinization" of the Castro

revolution, was not entirely surprising.

The poet, who lived in the United States until 1959, had been criticized on several occasions for failing to toe the regime's literary line.

"Outside the Game," the book for which Padilla won his national prize in 1968, triggered a behind-the-scenes dispute between the jury, which felt Padilla deserved the award, and literary officials who branded his book as "unfit revolutionarily."

THE BOOK was finally published, but with a lengthy prologue which said it was full of "skepticism, ambiguities, critical philosophy and anti-historicism."

The Cuban armed forces magazine Verde Olivo charged that Padilla was aiding the CIA through his "frankly counterrevolutionary" writings.

Verde Olivo said Padilla had arrived "late in the race to join the CIA. Others have already advanced more than he and already live from the benefits."

ANOTHER prominent Cuban writer, poet-playwright Anton Arrufat, now 36, came under fire from Verde Olivo a week later. The magazine claimed that the dramatist was "at war against the revolution." The criticism was specifically aimed at Arrufat's award-winning play "Seven Against Thebes," which was based on a Greek tragedy.